

MEISENBERG PAID THE BIG PRICE—WHY WORRY ABOUT HIS RECORD

BY N. D. COCHRAN

Several letters have come to The Day Book asking that Sammy Meisenberg's record in Chicago—before he joined the navy—be published—giving the inference that it was shady:

But why? If the police authorities and all others wiped out the past, and worshipped Meisenberg as a hero after he was killed at Vera Cruz in the performance of his duty, what good would it do any of the rest of us to kick up a fuss about the past now?

No matter what that record may have been, Sammy has paid the price. He is dead; and, according to the general way of looking at war, he died an honorable death. He can't die again. Nobody can put him in jail. His suffering is over.

Sammy is not unlike hundreds of thousands of other boys who didn't have the best chance in the world to become successful citizens.

Notwithstanding the handicap of poverty and comparative ignorance, Sammy did become a successful citizen. Not by remaining in Chicago and fighting the odds, but by going to war and getting killed.

He did what the other marines did who suffered the same fate. He obeyed orders, took the chances of war, lost his life and gained undying fame—in Chicago.

Besides that, his death and the high honors paid his remains when they were brought home, served a useful patriotic purpose; for it surely tempted other boys to give up trying to become rich and to go to war, glory and death instead.

Those of us who direct the nation's destinies by our advice should feel duly grateful to heroes like Sammy Meisenberg—for they help us to get other poor boys to enlist, go to war and risk their lives for our protection. That makes it possible for many of us to stay at home where we are out of range of the enemy's guns—and attend strictly to our own business.

I think Hearst did all he could to thank Sammy and the thousands of other soldier boys by devoting many columns of praise to him after his death. Hearst was under great obligation to the soldiers who died at Vera Cruz, and no doubt would be as grateful to several hundred thousand more dead heroes if he could bring on a real war with Mexico that would result in American occupation and increased value of American-owned estates in the land below the Rio Grande.

I can't see any reason why anybody

should raise the slightest objection to the great honors paid Chicago's dead hero. The patriotic demonstration evidently made many people feel better. There was a new thrill about it. It made great newspaper copy, fired boys with the spirit of adventure and thus helped put Chicago in shape to furnish her share of boys for the sacrifice whenever in the future a few of us feel that some sacrifice of the many is necessary.

I imagine that on the day of that impressive parade—the day when the body lay in state in the City Hall—many bright, ambitious and thoroughly patriotic Chicago boys had visions of themselves dying for their country and being brought home in a flag-covered casket and lying in state in the City Hall, to be admired by thousands.

How many of Chicago's multi-millionaires will have a parade like that when they die?

And how many of their bodies will lie in state in the City Hall?

Darned few.